

Message Text

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12

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 AS-01 /027 W
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P R 110845Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6956

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 TEHRAN 4770

EXDIS

DEPT PASS FEA FOR ADMINISTRATOR ZARB

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, OPEC IR

SUBJ: VISIT OF FEA ADMINISTRATOR ZARB TO TEHRAN

REF: TEHRAN 4694(NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FEA AMDINISTRATOR'S TEHRAN VISIT (MAY 7-10) WAS USEFUL AND HELPFUL. HE HAD EMBASSY BRIEFING EVENING OF MAY 7 ON GENERAL POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, STRATEGIC AND PETROLEUM MATTERS. HE MET ON MAY 8 WITH TAGHI MOSSADEGHI, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL IRANIAN GAS COMPANY(NIGC), WITH DR. PARVIZ MINA, DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OF THE NATIONAL IRANIAN OIL COMPANY(NIOC), WITH A GROUP OF US OIL COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES AND EMBASSY OFFICERS AT LUNCHEON
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GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR, ATTENDED SMALL DINNER EVENING OF MAY 8 AT

HOME OF MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND FINANCE HUSHANG ANSARY. HE MET ON MAY 9 WITH NIOC DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR DR. REZA FALLAH AND WITH MININT AND GOI OPEC REP AMOUZEGAR, THEN ATTENDED SMALL LUNCHEON AT MINISTER ANSARY'S RESIDENCE AT WHICH ONLY OTHER GUEST WAS AMBASSADOR HELMS. LATE AFTERNOON OF MAY 9 HE HELD PRESS CONFERENCE WITH REPORTERS FROM IRANIAN AND FOREIGN MEDIA. IN MEETINGS WITH ALL IRANIAN OFFICIALS ADMINISTRATOR EMPHASIZED US VIEW THAT CONTINUED OIL PRICE FREEZE "AT LEAST THROUGH END OF 1976" WOULD BE BEST FOR ALL CONCERNED DUE "TENDERNESS" AND VULNERABILITY OF PRESENT ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROCESS. HE DESCRIBED CURRENT STATE OF US ENERGY POLICY AND DIRECTION IT IS HEADING TO ALL GOI OFFICIALS EXCEPT FALLAH, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FACTORS THAT MAY TEND PERMANENTLY TO REDUCE MARKET HOF HEAVY OILS. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT BOTH GOI OFFICIALS AND ADMINISTRATOR BENEFITED FROM DISCUSSIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. FEA ADMINISTRATOR FRANK G. ZARB BEGAN MEETINGS WITH GOI OFFICIALS MORNING OF MAY 8 WITH MOSSADEGHI OF NIGC. MOSSADEGHI BRIEFLY DESCRIBED GAS RESERVES SITUATION, MAJOR EXPORT PROJECTS AND DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION OF GAS. HE NOTED THAT IT IS NOW ESTIMATED THAT OFFSHORE L-STURCTURE(NOW RENAMED PARS FIELD) CONTAINS AT LEAST 200 TCF OF RECOVERABLE RESERVES AND THAT PROMISING DISCOVERIES HAVE BEEN MADE ELSEWHERE, AND INDICATED CONFIDENCE THAT IRAN HAS AMPLE RESERVES FOR EXPORT PROJECTS, GAS INJECTION IN OIL FIELDS AND DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. HE SAID THE EL PASO/DISTRIGAZ PROJECT HOPES TO DELIVER LNG TO US AT PRICE OF \$2.35 PER MMBTU, SHIP'S RAIL US EAST COAST, AND SIAD IRAN HAD ASKED SUEZ CANAL AUTHORITY FOR TOLL OF 3.7 CENTS PER MMBTU, AND THAT SCA HAS COUNTER-OFFERED 9 CENTS PER MMBTU. MOSSADEGHI WAS CONFIDENT COMPROMISE COULD BE REACHED. HE SAID NIGC/EL PASO/DISTRIGAZ NOW THINKING IN TERMS OF 185,000 CUBIC METER LNG CARRIERS, AS FLUOR CORP STUDY SHOWS VESSELS OF THIS SIZE MOST ECONOMICAL, AND SCA ASSURES HIM THAT BY EARLY 1980'S VESSELS OF THIS SIZE CAN TRANSIT CANAL. MOSSADEGHI SAID TRI-LATERAL "SWITCH DEAL" PROVIDES FOR 52/48 DIVISION OF PRICE PAID BY W. EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM TO IRAN AND USSR RESPECTIVELY. HE SAID KALINGAS PROJECT AT MOMENT HAS PROBLEMS WITH MARKET, AS THEY ONLY HAVE FIRM COMMITMENT FO 400 MMSCFD(FROM JAPANESE), WHICH WOULD BE PRODUCT OF ONLY TWO LIQUEFACTION TRAINS. GIVEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND OFFSITES(PLANT, UTILITIES, ETC.) THAT MUST BE BUILT, TWO

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RRAINS NOT ECONOMICAL; FOUR WOULD BE GOOD, SIX WOULD BE EXCELLENT. ONE IMPORTANT PROBLEM AT MOMENTS, HE SAID, IS FPC: HE HAS NO IDEA HOW LONG IT MAY TAKE TO GET FPC APPROVAL, IF IT CAN BE OBTAINED AT ALL. SOME US COMPANIES PAINT OPTIMISTIC PICTURE OF FUTURE FPC DECISION-MAKING AND FO134 *0: :#83* , - IKAS HAD PROMISED MOSSADEGHI QUICK ACTION, BUT OTHER COMPANIES SPEAK OF EDNLESS AND COMPLEX PROCEDURES AND THIS APPEARS BORNE OUT BY EXPERIENCE. NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE ASKS, HE IS NO CLOSER TO UNDERSTANDING FPC

DECISION-MAKING. WHAT HE NEEDS, HE SAID, IS SOME ASSURANCE THAT WHEN APPLICATIONS ARE FORMALLY SUBMITTED, FPC WILL GIVE FIRM YES OR NO WITHIN TWO-THREE MONTHS. ADMINISTRATOR PROMISED TO TALK TO NEW FPC CHIEF DUNHAM ASAP AND TO REPORT RESULT TO MOSSADEGHI (VIA EMBASSY TEHRAN) BEFORE MAY 26(WHEN MOSSADEGHI NEXT MEETS WITH EL PASO GROUP) IF POSSIBLE. MOSSADEGHI INQUIRED ABOUT US "TARGET" OF ONE TRILLION CUBIC FOOT A YEAR (1TCF/Y) OF LNG IMPORTS. ADMINISTRATOR INDICATED THIS IS INDEED TARGET, NOT LIMIT, AND SIAD AS THIS LEVEL APPROACHED(AND IF NECESSARY, EXCEEDED) USG WILL STUDY EACH PROJECT WITH GREAT CARE FROM SEVERAL POINTS OF VIEW, INCLUDING US REGIONAL DEPENDENCE, SECURITY OF SUPPLY LINE, COST, ETC. HE SIAD IF US ENERGY POLICY CONTINUES AS HE HOPES, US MAY NOT NEED MUCH MORE IMPORTED LNG THAN ONE TCF. HE DESCRIBED FOUR PARTS OF US ENERGY POLICY(INCLUDING FIFTH POINT ON "STRATEGIC STORAGE PROGRAM" DUE ANSARY'S REQUEST THAT HE NOT DISCUSS THIS WITH OTHER GOI OFFICIALS). PROGRAM, HE SAID, CONSISTS OF(A) CONSERVATION(INCREASED AUTOMOBILE FUEL EFFICIENCY AND INDUSTRY'S DECREASED ENERGY USE PER UNIT OF OUTPUT WELL UNDERWAY; REDUCED RATE OF GROWTH OF ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION EVEN AFTER FULL RECOVERY);(B) OIL AND GAS(PHASED DECONTROL OF OIL PRICES UNDER EXISTING PROGRAMS, ALASKA PIPELINE, ALASKA GAS PIPELINE, EXPLORATION OF NEW ALASKAN AREAS AND OCS, DECONTROL OF NATURAL GAS PRICES TO ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE 12 MMBD OF OIL PRODUCTION AND 22-23 MMSCF/Y OF GAS PRODUCTION BY 1985);(C) COAL(STRIP MINING IN WEST AND DEEP MINING IN EAST FOR LOW SULPHUR COAL, TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT, INCLUDING RAILWAYS AND SLURRY PIPELINES, AND CONTINUING IMPROVEMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY AND PRODUCTION OF STEEL GAS SCRUBBERS, NECESSARY TO INCREASE COAL PRODUCTION FROM 600 MMT/Y TO OVER 1,000 MMT/Y IN NEXT TEN YEARS);(D) NUCLEAR (57 PLANTS IN OPERATION, 47-48 UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND 50 MORE IN VARIOUS STAGES OF LICENSING TO RAISE NUCLEAR CONTRIBUTION TO ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION FROM 9 PERCENT IN 1975 TO 25-26 PERCENT IN 1985).

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CENT IN 1985).

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 AS-01 /027 W
----- 060412

P R 110845Z MAY 76
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6957
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TIRPOLI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 TEHRAN 4770

EXDIS

DEPT PASS FEA FOR ADMINISTRATOR ZARB

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG, OPEC, IR
SUBJ: VISIT OF FEA ADMINISTRATOR ZARB TO TEHRAN

3. IN CORDIAL AND WIDE-RANGING TALK WITH NIOC'S PARVIZ MINA, ADMINISTRATOR GAVE OUTLINE OF US ENERGY POLICY, AS ABOVE. MINA ASKED ABOUT OIL COMPANY DIVESTITURE LEGISLATION IN US. ZARB DOUBTED LEGISLATION WOULD GET THROUGH CONGRESS THIS YEAR, AND SAID EVEN IF IT DID, CONGRESS COULD NOT OVERRIDE PRESIDENT'S PROMISED VETO. ADMINISTRATOR ASKED MINA STATUS OF OIL-FOR-WEAPONS BARTER. MINA REPLIED THAT ONE DEFENSE SUPPLIER, NORTHROP, IS AHEAD OF PACK AND THAT CROWN CENTRAL IS INTERESTED IN TAKING ABOUT 100,000 B/D OF CRUDE(WARNING: HIGHLY PROPRIETARY). MINA SAID CUSTOMERS OF COURSE WANT LIGHT CRUDE, WHILE HE ONLY
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NEEDS TO SELL HEAVY. THUS HE IS OFFERING A BARREL OF LIGHT FOR EACH BARREL OF HEAVY AS AN INCENTIVE. BASIC CONCEPT OF THIS BARTER IS THAT IN EXCHANGE FOR FIRM, LONG-TERM OFFTAKE COMMITMENT, NIOC WOULD GIVE PERHAPS SHARPLY EXTENDED CREDIT TERMS, BUT NO DISCOUNT OFF NOMINAL "OPEC MARKET PRICE." OIL COMPANY BUYER (IN GENERAL, PROBABLY AN INDEPENDENT NOT NOW BUYING IRANIAN OIL), WOULD DEPOSIT PAYMENTS IN AN ACCOUNT IN US OWNED BY NIOC. FROM THIS ACCOUNT, NIOC WOULD PAY DEFENSE SUPPLIERS AGAINST INVOICES

APPROVED BY GOI. MINA SAID THAT EVEN IF OIL MARKET IMPROVES LATE THIS YEAR SO THAT NIOC CAN SELL MOST AVAILABLE HEAVY CRUDE (AS NIOC ANTICIPATES), NIOC WILL STILL BE INTERESTED IN THESE BARTER DEALS BECAUSE OF LONG-TERM FIRM OFFTAKE FEATURE.

4. MINA BRIEFLY DESCRIBED STATE OF PLAY IN NIOC/CONSORTIUM NEGOTIATIONS, INDICATING THAT NIOC WANTS COMPANIES TO GIVE MINIMUM OFFTAKE COMMITMENTS, EVEN IF NUMBERS ARE LOW. NIOC WOULD THEN SELL THEM ADDITIONAL CRUDE IF THEY WANT IT AND IT IS AVAILABLE. HE NOTED COMPANIES' DESIRE FOR TECHNICAL MANAGERIAL SERVICE FEE ON EACH BARREL PRODUCED, AS IN SAUDI AND VENEZUELA, AND SAID NIOC WILL NEVER AGREE TO THIS, BECAUSE IN A FEW YEARS INTERNAL CONSUMPTION PLUS SHARE THAT NIOC MARKETS DIRECTLY WILL ACCOUNT FOR OVER HALF OF TOTAL PRODUCTION. MINA FEELS TALKS HAVE GONE WELL AND INDICATED (A) FORMULA WILL BE FOUND TO MAKE IRANIAN OIL AS ATTRACTIVE AS SAUDI (UNDER FORTHCOMING SAG/ARAMCO AGREEMENT) AND (B) THAT A FORMULA IS IN HAND THAT SHOULD ASSURE SAUDI/IRANIAN EQUIVALENCY WILL NOT BE ALTERED BY DIFFERING US TAX TREATMENT.

5. ON SUBJECT OF OPEC MEETING IN BALI, ADMINISTRATOR OBSERVED THAT FOR REASONS GIVEN IN PARA 1, USG BELIEVES BEST DECISION FOR ALL PARTIES WOULD BE CONTINUED FREEZE. MINA INDICATED HE APPRECIATED NEED NOT TO HAMPER RECOVERY, BUT OBSERVED OPEC MUST TAKE LOOK AT PURCHASING POWER OF OIL, OPEC ECONOMIC COMMISSION BOARD CONTINUING STUDIES ON INCREASE IN PRICES OF OPEC IMPORTS WHICH SO FAR SUGGEST THESE COSTS HAVE INCREASED BY 15 PERCENT SINCE LAST OCT 1. MINA OBSERVED THAT WHILE OPEC USES OECD AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL INDICES, RESULTS DIFFER BECAUSE OPEC CONSIDERS ONLY GOODS AND QUANTITIES IMPORTED BY OPEC, NOT ALL THOSE EXPORTED BY OTHER NATIONS. FURTHER, HE SAID THAT OPEC IS STILL NOT INCLUDING CERTAIN ITEMS, SUCH AS COST OF TECHNOLOGY/TECHNOLOGICAL SERVICES THAT MIGHT

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DRIVE INDEX UP FURTHER. HOWEVER, HE ADMITTED THAT OPEC WORKS WITH CIF FIGURES, WHICH INCLUDE FREIGHT SURCHARGES, DUMURRAGE, AND INFLATED INSURANCE CHARGES RESULTING FROM INTERNAL PROBLEMS IN OPEC COUNTRIES. FOR THIS AND GENERAL ECONOMIC REASONS, HE DID NOT BELIEVE OPEC PRICE INCREASE WILL BE CLOSE TO OPEC'S COST INFLATION FIGURE. MINA MADE USUAL ARGUMENTS ABOUT NEED TO HAVE BASE OIL PRICE SET AT LEVEL THAT STIMULATES DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATE SOURCES OF ENERGY, ADJUSTED TO MAINTAIN "REAL VALUE" (REAL "PURCHASING POWER") OF OIL. MINA AT CONCLUSION ARRANGED TO GIVE ADMINISTRATOR COPY OF PAPER HE HAD WRITTEN SOME YEARS AGO ARGUING THAT OIL PRICES SINCE WWII HAD ALWAYS BEEN INFLUENCED MORE BY POLITICAL THAN ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS.

6. LUNCHEON WITH US OIL COMPANY REPS GAVE OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO QUESTION ADMINISTRATOR AND ACTING ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR MALIN

ON DEVELOPMENTS IN US ENERGY POLICY. MEETING ON FOLLOWING DAY WITH NIOC'S REZA FALLAH DEALT MOSTLY WITH NEGOTIATIONS HERE WITH CONSORTIUM AND THOSE BETWEEN SAG AND ARAMCO. NEW ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE CONSORTIUM WILL LEAVE THEM ESSENTIALLY AS PURCHASERS, WITH SLIGHTLY PREFERRED POSITION. IT IS NECESSARY, SAID FALLAH, TO AWAIT OUTCOME OF ARAMCO TALKS, THEN TO ADAPT(READ REDUCE) TOTAL BENEFITS GIVEN BY SAG TO IRANIAN CONDITIONS; A FORMULA CAN THEN BE FOUND TO GIVE ESSENTIALLY THE EQUIVALENT PER BARREL "INCENTIVE" (THAT IS, PER BARREL LIFTED BY COMPANIES) AS ARAMCO PARTNERS GET. RE OPEC, FALLAH ASSERTED MOST OF ARGUMENT BETWEEN SAUDI AND IRAN AT SEPT 1975 OPEC MEETING CENTERED ON "5 PERCENT OCT 1 AND 5 PERCENT JAN 1 VERSUS 10 PERCENT OCT 1." FALLAH ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED DELICACY OF PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION AND SAID HE HAD NO IDEA WHAT PRICE INCREASE, IF ANY, MIGHT EMERGE FROM BALI OPEC MEETING. FALLAH CALLED ADMINISTRATOR'S ATTENTION TO HIS IDEA, GIVEN IN THREE PUBLIC SPEECHES AND "SENT INFORMALLY TO SECRETARY KISSINGER," OF AN INTERNATIONAL ENERGY BANK, WHICH COULD ISSUE "ENERGY BONDS," TO BE BOUGHT BY OPEC SURPLUS STATES. MALIN NOTED SIMILARITY OF THIS IDEA TO SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL AT UNCTAD OF AN "INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES BANK." EMBASSY PROVIDED COPY OF FALLAH'S SPEECH ON THIS SUBJECT TO ADMINISTRATOR.

7. ADMINISTRATOR'S TALK WITH MINISTER AMOUEZGAR ON OPEC BALI MEETING REPORTED SEPTEL. THIS PORTION OF THEIR CONVERSATION COVERED FIVE OF TEN MINUTES OF HOUR-LONG CONVERSATION IN WHICH THE TWO DISCUSSED FULL RANGE OF TOPICS REPORTED ABOVE.
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AMOUEZGAR REPEATED REMARKS HE HAS RECENTLY MADE TO OTHERS CONCERNING HIS DOUBTS ABOUT LNG EXPORTS COMPETING WITH IRAN'S HEAVY CRUDE SALES AND YIELDING FAR LESS NET REVENUE(MINA HAD FRANKLY EXPRESSED SIMILAR DOUBTS). IN THIS CONNECTION, AS WELL AS THAT OF OPEC PRICES AND COST OF ALTERNATE SOURCES OF ENERGY, ADMINISTRATOR DESCRIBED HOW HEAVY OILS HAD BEEN "PERMANENTLY PRICED OUT OF NORTHEASTERN US MARKET," AND COMMENTED THAT IN HIS VIEW, RECENT OPEC PRICING DECISIONS HAVE HAD GREATER ADVERSE EFFECT ON IRAN AND VENEZUELA THAN ON ANY OTHER OPEC COUNTRIES. (ADMINISTRATOR USED THIS ARGUMENT, APPARENTLY TO SOME EFFECT, IN TALKS WITH MINA AND FALLAH AS WELL.)

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 AS-01 /027 W

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P R 110845Z MAY 76

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6958

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USINT BAGHDAD

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AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDO

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 TEHRAN 4770

EXDIS

DEPT PASS FEA FOR ADMINISTRATOR ZARB

8. IN SESSIONS WITH MINISTER ANSARY, ADMINISTRATOR COVERED MOST OF TOPICS ABOVE, AND ALSO DISCUSSED IRANIAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND IN A GENERAL WAY, THE US STRATEGIC STORAGE PROGRAM. PRESS CONFERENCE QUESTIONS CENTERED ON OIL-FOR-WEAPONS BARTER, STRATEGIC STORAGE PURCHASES, THE CONSORTIUM TALKS, AND THE OPEC MEETING IN BALI. ADMINISTRATOR EXPLAINED, AS ABOVE, WHY HE THINKS CONTINUED FREEZE WOULD BE BEST FOR ALL, SAID HE FOUND IN GOI OFFICIALS "SENSITIVE AND RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDES" TOWARD PROBLEMS AND THAT IT WOULD BE SILLY FOR HIM TO GUESS RESULT IN BALI, AS NOT EVEN OPEC MINISTERS YET KNOW. HE EMPHASIZED BARTER TALKS ARE IN EARLY STATE AND ARE BETWEEN PRIVATE US COMPANIES AND NIOC. ZARB DENIED STRATEGIC STORAGE PROGRAM WAS PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT. PRESS REACTION HAS BEEN LIGHT. MEDIA PROBABLY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO USE MATERIAL ON BARTER
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AND STRATEGIC SOTRAGE, AS THESE HAVE BEEN UNDER WRAPS HERE.

9. PLEASE NOTE THAT ADMINISTRATOR PROMISED TO INFORM MOSSADEGHI RESULTS OF HIS TALK WITH FPC CHIEF, IF POSSIBLE BEFORE MAY 26TH, AND TO PROVIDE DR. MINA MATERIAL ON COSTS OF COAL LIQUEFACTION

AND GASIFICATION.
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04 MAY 2006

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